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Approved For Release 2004/07/07 : CIA RDP79B01709A002000050030-3  
**TOP SECRET**

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4 August 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Recommended CIA Position on Recommendation  
6.a. and b. of the NSAM 156 Committee Report  
of 11 July 1966 [redacted]

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1. The NSAM 156 Committee recommends guidelines and principles to further the activities of the NASA and other Government agencies in the non-military applications of satellite earth sensing. Recommendations 6.a. and b. of the report asks USIB to review:

a. The matter of lifting codeword controls over references to a US operational satellite reconnaissance program in order to permit explaining at the SECRET or TOP SECRET level to Government personnel concerned with non-military satellite earth sensing programs the reasons for certain limitations on the areas in which they should concern themselves.

b. The matter of either selective removal of certain photography from codeword control for classified use by selected NASA and other cleared personnel or, alternatively, the clearance of an increased number of personnel for codeword materials.

2. After consideration of a wide range of Agency opinions on these questions, we recommend that, for the time being, both the fact of an operational satellite reconnaissance program and the photography derived therefrom should remain within the TALENT-KEYHOLE compartment and that additional clearances be granted to NASA or other agencies as needed for understandings of the programs or for use of the product.

3. Within the Agency, three distinct positions emerge: one, (primarily OCI) favors downgrading to SECRET or TOP SECRET both the existence of and products from satellite reconnaissance. A second position (O/DD/I) proposes decontrol to TOP SECRET of only the fact of satellite reconnaissance while retaining the imagery product within the T-KH security compartment. A third position (primarily the Office of Security) is for retention of the existing procedures and controls.

NRO review(s) completed.

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4. The downgrading to SECRET or TOP SECRET of both the existence of the program and its products would permit publication of the product without resorting to sanitization processes. The proponents of this position argue that the product derives from a program about which much already has been published in the press. However, relaxation of security limitations on the product to this extent presents too great a risk regarding possible compromise of the accomplishments of the collection system. Decontrol only of the fact of the program would permit briefing of personnel holding a TOP SECRET clearance and thus provide some limits on speculation about the existence and use of the satellite reconnaissance program. However, limiting the downgrading to the TOP SECRET level would not open the reconnaissance door to a significantly greater number of Government employees, and to downgrade to the SECRET or below level imposes an unacceptable degree of risk of compromise. The retention of both the fact of and product from satellite reconnaissance programs within the T-KH compartment offers the greatest assurance of continuing protection of this valuable intelligence source and of fulfilling the Director's responsibility for protection of intelligence sources and methods. Additional T-KH clearances to NASA and other agencies will assist in controlling speculation and in furthering understanding of reasons for limits on unclassified earth sensing programs without destroying a means for continued application of the need-to-know principle. We believe the CIA position on this question must place greater weight on the Director's statutory responsibility for protection of the system, rather than on the greater convenience which downgrading and decontrol would provide.

5. It is pertinent to report at this point that during the concurrent COMOR considerations of these problems, a NASA representative stated that although decontrol of the fact of the program would help them within the Government and with a few of their contractors, NASA's major problems with classification stem from work with non-cleared (and perhaps unclearable) foundations, universities and the general scientific and academic communities. Therefore, any compromise measure, other than complete declassification, will not really solve NASA's principal problem.

6. This memorandum has been concurred in by the DD/S&T, the Office of Security for the DD/S, the CIA Director of Reconnaissance and the DD/P.

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Chief  
DD/I Collection Guidance Staff

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